The Gallatin School of Individualized Study  
New York University  
Fall 2012  

First-Year Writing Seminar: The BODY POLITIC and the POLITICS of the BODY in AMERICAN CULTURE (FIRST-UG382)  
MW, 11:00AM - 12:15 PM  
601 1 Washington Place  

Instructor: Yevgeniya Traps  
Contact: y21@nyu.edu  
Office: 603 1 Washington Place  
Office Hour: Monday, 2:30 – 4:00 PM and by appointment  

COURSE DESCRIPTION  
On the surface, nothing seems more private than the experience of the body and more public than politics. But, look deeper, and it becomes evident that representations of the body have extensive political implications. The intersection of the public and private, of the body politic and the politics of the body, will thus be our chief concern. We will consider how bodies are imagined, monitored, disciplined, and represented, and examine the body’s role in political life. How does ideology shape our understanding of the body, our own and others? How do artistic and pop culture depictions of bodies translate into political action? What might it mean for the body to serve as political battleground?  

Using writing as a way of thinking critically, we will work, throughout the semester, on the process of crafting original analytical and literary-critical essays.  

REQUIRED TEXTS  
All texts have been ordered at the NYU Bookstore (726 Broadway).  


All other readings will be made available via BlackBoard (indicated as BB on the schedule) or as handouts.  

COURSE POLICIES  
It is essential that you attend class regularly, arrive promptly, and submit all work on time. If you suspect you might need an extension, please let me know well ahead of time so that we can make arrangements. If you need to miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out about any work you may have missed. Please keep in mind that more than two unexcused absences will have an adverse effect on your grade; so will persistent lateness.
Participation—both in class discussion and in smaller group work—is an important part of your course grade. Please come to class prepared to ask questions, to comment, to fully engage. You must bring the assigned readings to each class meeting.

Please make sure to turn off all cell phones before class begins. (Seriously. Please turn everything off.) You may choose to use laptops or tablets in order to follow along with the assigned readings and/or take notes, but please make sure that your device is used solely for these purposes.

REMEMBER: Any and all work you hand in this semester must be your own. Whenever you use someone else’s words or ideas, you must cite them properly. Per official school policy: “As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html] for a full description of the academic integrity policy.”

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I am glad to meet with you to discuss all assignments or any other aspect of the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
The class will be divided into four groups. The groups will be responsible for initiating and guiding our discussions on assigned days. In preparation for leading the discussion, each group member will post a page-long close reading of a particularly striking textual moment to the discussion board on BlackBoard. The reflections will be used as a way of sparking and focusing our discussions, but they will also direct our conversations about writing; as such, your reflections should stake out an argumentative position, organized in clear paragraphs. Your reflection must be posted no later than midnight on the day your group is leading discussion. PLEASE NOTE: it is everyone’s responsibility to become familiar with all submitted reflections as part of preparations for class.

You are expected to comment on at least one reflection on those days when you have not posted one. This must be done by noon of the day after discussion.

You will also be responsible for three formal essays in the course of the semester. We will approach writing as a process, and a rough draft of each paper will be workshopped. You must be prepared to bring several copies of your work to class on designated days; your participation in the workshops is essential and will be part of your grade for the paper. You will submit an official draft of each paper following the workshop. You will have the opportunity to revise the first three graded papers should you wish to do so.

The submitted draft of each paper must be accompanied by a reflection on the writing and revision process, articulating your goals for and concerns about the paper, as well as a careful consideration of the choices you made in accomplishing these goals and addressing these concerns.

All papers—including the writing and revision reflection—must be submitted electronically as PDF files; the file name must be “LastName EssayNumber DraftNumber.” Please submit
papers by 10AM on the date due. PLEASE NOTE: Late papers will be marked down half a grade for each day after the due date.

Finally, you will take turns bringing in images/mentions of the body for discussion. You will be given a chance to sign up for your turn to do so shortly.

Your final course grade will be based on: Participation: 10%
Reflections: 15%
Presentation: 15%
Essays: 60%

FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
The FIRST PAPER will be a three- to four-page close reading. You will be asked to discuss a particular line/image/passage in relation to the work of which it is part, to consider its significance in relation to the whole, and discuss its contribution to the work’s meaning.

The SECOND PAPER will be a four- to six-page analysis of bodily representation in a visual text of your choice. That is, you will consider and dissect the implications of the particular representational choices made in the text.

The THIRD PAPER will be a five- to seven-page application of the critical theories to an aspect of American culture. In this final paper, you will be asked to analyze the intersection of the personal and the political in bodily representation through a theoretical lens of your own design. This means you will need to both develop a “theory of the body” and to apply that theory.

COURSE SCHEDULE
Depending on the pace we establish, this schedule is subject to change with notice.

Wednesday, September 5
INTRODUCTION and Diagnostic

Monday, September 10
Group I-IV
Grosz, “Refiguring Bodies” (in The Body)
Foucault, “The Political Investment of the Body” (in The Body)
Sekula, “The Body and the Archive” (in The Body)

Wednesday, September 12
Group I
Mauss, “Techniques of the Body” (in The Body)
Douglas, “The Two Bodies” (in The Body)
Bourdieu, “Belief and the Body” (in The Body)

Monday, September 17
Group II
Creed, “Lesbian Bodies” (in The Body)
Stone, “In Novel Conditions” (in The Body)

Wednesday, September 19
Group III
Gilman, “The Jewish Voice” and “The Jewish Foot” (in The Jew’s Body)

Monday, September 24
Group IV
Gilman, “The Jewish Nose” and “The Jewish Essence” (in The Jew’s Body)
Wednesday, September 26
Class Canceled

Monday, October 1
FIRST PAPER WORKSHOP

Wednesday, October 3
Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (BB)
Canguilhem, “Monstrosity and the Monstrous” (in The Body)
Louise Bourgeois, Selected Works (BB)
FIRST PAPER DUE

Monday, October 8
Group I
O’Reilly, Chapters 1-4 (in The Body in Contemporary Art)

Wednesday, October 10
Group II
Orlan, “I do not want to look like…” (in The Body)
Orlan, Carnal Art (BB)
O’Reilly, Chapters 5-6 (in The Body in Contemporary Art)

Monday, October 15
NO CLASS

Wednesday, October 17
In-Class Film Screening

Monday, October 22
In-Class Film Screening

Wednesday, October 24
Group III
BODIES in CONSUMER CULTURE (in The Body)
Advertising [NOTE: Please bring in an ad that makes use of the body as a selling point]

Monday, October 29
Group IV
Susan Bordo, “Beauty Rediscoveres the Male Body” (BB)
Robert Mapplethorpe, Selected Work (BB)

Wednesday, October 31
SECOND PAPER WORKSHOP

Monday, November 5
Group I
Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women” (BB)
Skeggs, “Ambivalent Femininities” (in The Body)

Wednesday, November 7
Group II
Davis, “Visualizing the Disabled Body” (in The Body)
Freund, “Bodies, Disability and Spaces” (in The Body)
Crimp, “Portraits of People with AIDS” (in The Body)

Monday, November 12
Group III
Martin, “Complex Systems” (in The Body)
Frank, “The Self Unmade” (in The Body)
Haraway, “The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies” (in The Body)

Wednesday, November 14
Group IV
Burns, Black Hole

Monday, November 19
Group I
Burns, Black Hole
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 21</td>
<td>Burns, <em>Black Hole</em></td>
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<td>Monday, November 26</td>
<td>Scarry, Chapter 1: “The Structure of Torture” (in <em>The Body in Pain</em>)</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 28</td>
<td>Scarry, Chapter 3: “Pain and Imagining” (in <em>The Body in Pain</em>)</td>
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<td>Monday, December 3</td>
<td>Jonas, “The Burden and Blessing of Mortality” (in <em>The Body</em>)</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 5</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 12</td>
<td>FOURTH PAPER WORKSHOP</td>
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<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
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